

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

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S E C R E T ATHENS 4160

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MILI, GR, US

SUBJECT: PM CARAMANLIS' CONCERN AT REMARKS ATTRIBUTED TO
US OFFICER

EYES ONLY NAPLES FOR POLAD STODDART

1. TZOUNIS, FONOFF DIRGEN FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS, CALLED IN DCM JUNE 4 ON DIRECTION OF PM CARAMANLIS TO DISCUSS REPORT RECEIVED FROM GREEK OFFICERS STATIONED AT AFSOUTH HEADQUARTERS IN NAPLES. THE PM HAD BEEN ADVISED OF STATEMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO LT. GEN. NORTON, USA, AFSOUTH CHIEF OF STAFF, WHICH GREEK OFFICERS INTERPRETED AS ANTI-GREEK AND ANTI-CARAMANLIS. THE PM WAS CONCERNED AND WISHED TO HAVE HIS CONCERN CONVEYED TO WASHINGTON.

2. TZOUNIS ADVERTED TO THE FACT THAT DEFMIN AVEROFF HAD DISCUSSED THIS SITUATION INFORMALLY WITH THE EMBASSY (ABOUT FIVE WEEKS AGO) AND THAT AT THAT TIME EMBASSY HAD REVIEWED THE EPISODE THROUGH THE US ELEMENT AT AFSOUTH, WHICH BELIEVED THERE HAD BEEN A MISUNDERSTANDING. THE DCM ADVISED TZOUNIS THAT THE MATTER HAD BEEN DISCUSSED BY AFSOUTH WITH LT. GEN. NORTON WHO FELT HIS REMARKS HAD BEEN MININTERPRETED. TZOUNIS SAID HE WOULD BRING THIS TO CARAMANLIS' ATTENTION BUT STILL BELIEVED THE PM WOULD WISH THE EMBASSY TO REPORT THE MATTER TO WASHINGTON.

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3. TZOUNIS STATED THAT THE PM WISHED TO BE SURE THAT THE

DEPARTMENTS OF STATE AND DEFENSE WERE AWARE OF THE NEED FOR US OFFICERS TO AVOID ANY COMMENTS ON THE GREEK POLITICAL SITUATION OR GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS WHICH COULD LEAD "PRO-JUNTA" GREEK OFFICERS TO DRAW THE INFERENCE THAT THE USG FEARED GREECE WAS GOING COMMUNIST AND WOULD WELCOME A RETURN TO MILITARY GOVERNMENT.

4. COMMENT: UPON RECEIVING INFORMAL EXPRESSION OF CONCERN FROM DEFMIN AVEROFF ON APRIL 26, EMBASSY COMMUNICATED WITH AFSOUTH POLAD STODDART, WHO LOOKED INTO SITUATION AND REPORTED THAT MEETING BY LTGEN NORTON WITH GREEK OFFICERS ON APRIL 4 WAS ONE OF PERIODIC INFORMAL MEETINGS WITH SENIOR OFFICERS OF VARIOUS NATIONAL CONTINGENTS AT AFSOUTH AND THAT THESE MEETINGS WERE CONSIDERED USEFUL MEANS OF MAINTAINING LIAISON. MEETING IN QUESTION APPARENTLY INCLUDED DISCUSSION OF BALKAN DETENTE, GREEK MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS AND OTHER SUBJECTS AND LED ONE GREEK OFFICER TO DRAW MISTAKEN INFERENCE THAT GENERAL NORTON FEARED GREECE WAS HEADING TOWARD COMMUNISM. ON POLAD STODDART'S RECOMMENDATION, DCM, WITHOUT PUTTING ONUS ON ANY SPECIFIC GREEK OFFICER, DESCRIBED RESULT OF REVIEW OF SITUATION TO DEFMIN AVEROFF, WHO SEEMED SATISFIED BUT SAID HE WOULD REPORT EPISODE TO CARAMANLIS AND BITSIOS. REMARKS OF TZOUNIS TO DCM IS APPARENTLY THE SOMEWHAT DELAYED RESULT.

5. WE DO NOT RECOMMEND THAT DEPT. OR DOD TAKE ANY FURTHER ACTION ON THIS EPISODE, ALTHOUGH IT IS A REMINDER OF HOW CAREFUL US OFFICIALS, WHETHER ATTACHED TO NATO OR ELSEWHERE, MUST BE TO AVOID COMMENTS ON GREEK AFFAIRS WHICH MAY BE SUBJECT TO SIMILAR MISINTERPRETATION AT THIS DELICATE JUNCTURE IN OUR RELATIONS.

6. DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO DOD.
KUBISCH

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